

□ 1600

If we give these laboratories of democracy across the country the ability to innovate and the ability to meet the needs of the people that they serve, then they will do that. Government has always been most effective when it is closest to the people. I served on a school board. I know that I had a lot more interaction with my constituents on the school board because I lived in the same community with them than I did as a State legislator or even as I do as a Member of Congress.

We have to be able to give States more flexibility. We have to let them innovate and let them learn from one another across the country to use ideas that work one place and adapt them for another place. That is how we bring fiscal stability back to our Federal budget, by allowing States to manage their State budgets better.

As we look at these mandatory spending programs, as the gentleman from Indiana mentioned, the large part of this mandatory spending—nearly half of it—is all associated with health care. That is Medicare, which is \$634 billion in 2015; Medicaid, \$350 billion in 2015; and then other programs that make up about \$47 billion. Those, combined, are greater than the one single largest expenditure, which is Social Security, which we obviously need to reform, not to punish people but to make it sustainable, to make it last for those who really need the program, and to make it last for all Americans who have invested in that program. The same thing for Medicare.

If we refuse to make changes, if we continue to let the status quo be the current reality, then we will see all of these programs shrink and become insolvent over time, and at the same time we will see our Federal debt continue to bloom, and we will see the amount of interest we pay on the debt continue to grow.

Now is the time for us to take action. Now is the time for us to not only produce a budget that balances, but to enact that budget and to follow that budget.

Again, I would like to thank all the members of the Budget Committee who spoke on the issues today. We will be speaking on them more as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3716, ENSURING REMOVAL OF TERMINATED PROVIDERS FROM MEDICAID AND CHIP ACT

Mr. BURGESS (during the Special Order of Mr. WESTERMAN), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-440) on the resolution (H. Res. 632) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3716) to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to require States to provide to the

Secretary of Health and Human Services certain information with respect to provider terminations, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

#### HUNGER IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ABRAHAM). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight our important Federal nutrition programs, and I rise today to remind my colleagues that we have a hunger problem in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a single congressional district in this country that is hunger free. Every community—whether urban, suburban, or rural—faces hunger. One in seven Americans experience hunger, including 16 million children. We are the richest, most powerful country in the history of the world. It is shameful that even one child goes to bed hungry.

In every community across the country, there are dedicated, passionate local antihunger organizations that do incredible work to provide food assistance and support those struggling with hunger, from food banks to food pantries, to faith-based organizations, to community centers, to hospitals, and on and on and on. Charities do important, wonderful work, but they cannot do it alone. The demand is simply too high. Charities need a strong partner in the Federal Government if we are ever going to end hunger.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which used to be known as food stamps, is our Nation's premier antihunger program. It is effective and it is efficient, with an error rate of less than 4 percent, which includes both overpayments and underpayments.

By the way, underpayments are when a recipient receives less than they are eligible for, and that happens often.

Find me a Pentagon spending program with such a low error rate. The fact of the matter is SNAP is one of the most successful—if not the most successful—Federal programs that we have.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or WIC, provides nutritious foods, counseling on healthy eating, and breastfeeding support to more than 8 million low-income women and children at nutritional risk. WIC gives infants and young children the healthy, nutritious start that they need for critical early development and lifelong learning. It is an incredibly vital program.

The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and the Summer Food Service Program provide nutritious foods for millions of children and

teens in educational and community settings. These important programs ensure that our young people are ready to learn and that they can succeed.

The Meals on Wheels program provides home-delivered meals to millions of homebound seniors. Not only does Meals on Wheels improve senior nutrition, it also enables seniors to live independently longer while receiving daily check-in visits from volunteers.

These are just a few of the vital Federal antihunger programs that are the backbone of our fight to end hunger once and for all in this country. But, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why I am coming to this floor today is I am deeply worried that they are coming under attack by the Republican majority in this House.

Unfortunately, it is fashionable right now to demonize Americans living in poverty and to belittle their struggles. We hear that all too often on this House floor. We hear that all too often in this Presidential campaign that is going on. The fact of the matter is it is hard work to be poor in America. It is not easy. Yet millions of families are struggling, trying to raise their kids and living on a paycheck that doesn't provide enough to put food on the table.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, I spent a night at a homeless shelter in Worcester, Massachusetts, called the Interfaith Hospitality Network. It is a family homeless shelter. As you know, there are not enough shelters that accommodate entire families. Usually families get split up. But what I wasn't prepared for when I spent the night at this shelter was that every one of these families had at least one adult that was working. They were working in a job. They all had unique situations that put them in a very difficult situation. But the fact of the matter is they were working. They were earning just enough that a lot of their benefits were reduced, but they were not earning enough to be able to put a down payment on an apartment and afford rent.

These are parents that love their kids every bit as much as I love my kids and my colleagues love their kids. They want to be good parents, but they are struggling. They are looking for a hand up, not a handout. They are looking for a little bit of assistance so they can get back on their feet.

The bottom line is that their plight is not unique. I will tell my colleagues that their plight does not fall into a neat stereotype. Too often when people here in this Chamber talk about the homeless or the hungry, they talk about people who are addicted to drugs, or they talk about people who don't work or who don't want to work. That is not the reality. That is not the face of poverty in this country. It is much more complicated than that. And yet, to justify deep cuts in programs to actually help people get back on their feet, we hear the false narrative repeated over and over and over again, the demonization of these people who are struggling in poverty.

The rhetoric that we hear on the floor all too often is hurtful, and it is sometimes hateful. It is seeping into the discourse in this Congress, and it is seeping into some of the decision-making that is going on by the current leadership in this Congress.

It seems like just now Republican leaders are finally coming around to the idea that they need to talk about poverty. We heard the Speaker say that he wants a national conversation about poverty. But I have got to tell you I am a little worried, because while we need this conversation and while we need to come up with solutions, I have this sinking feeling that something else is going on, that this so-called conversation on poverty is really kind of a masquerade for cutting deeply into programs that will help put food and nutrition on people's tables and provide people the shelter that they need when they are struggling. I worry that this congressional task force that the Speaker announced, when I look at it, is made up of Members, all of whom have supported block-granting SNAP.

What block-granting means is that States can do almost whatever the heck they want to do with the SNAP benefit. They don't necessarily have to use it to provide people food. They can use it for other things; and, therefore, it puts that benefit at risk, especially during difficult economic times.

But every one of the people who is on this task force has voted for Republican budgets that support block-granting. Every one of the people on this so-called poverty task force voted to cut SNAP by \$40 billion during the last farm bill—\$40 billion.

Now, they would say: Oh, we are just trying to trim the program and make it more efficient. I would just say to my colleagues that the average SNAP benefit is \$1.40 per person per meal per day—\$1.40.

I bet most of my colleagues who are calling for deep cuts in SNAP have no idea what the benefit is. They have no idea how inadequate the benefit is. In fact, it is so inadequate that most families who are on SNAP end up having to rely on food banks, having to rely on churches, synagogues, and mosques at the end of the month to be able to put food on their table. It is \$1.40 per person per meal per day. That is the average benefit. Yet my colleagues, those who are on this so-called poverty task force, almost unanimously, on the other side of the aisle, voted to cut the program by \$40 billion.

I would ask my colleagues, what are you thinking? What are you thinking? We have an obligation to be there for the most vulnerable in this country. That is what government is supposed to be for. Donald Trump doesn't need government. He is a zillionaire. He doesn't have to worry about where his next meal is going to come from. Yet there are millions of people, millions of families in this country who do. They are looking for a little compassion. They are not looking for a handout.

They are looking for a hand up so they can get their lives in order and they can progress.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do better.

I will just say one other thing, and then I am going to yield to my colleague from Virginia.

There is another kind of nasty discussion going on by my Republican colleagues. They have a new proposal to drug-test SNAP recipients. The fact of the matter is this proposal has no basis in reality. It is nothing more than a mean-spirited attack on poor people to fire up their rightwing base. It is insulting. It is insulting.

We have seen drug test laws in Florida and Georgia struck down as unconstitutional and end up wasting taxpayer dollars to identify very few drug users. In fact, those receiving public assistance test positive for illicit drugs at a lower rate than the general population—at a lower rate than the general population. It doesn't fit into the rightwing narrative of who comprises those who live in poverty in America, but it is the fact. It is the fact.

Why aren't Republicans in this bill calling for drug testing for wealthy CEOs and oil company executives who receive taxpayer subsidies? Why aren't they calling for Members of Congress to undergo drug tests? After all, our salaries are paid by the taxpayers in this country. Why don't you call for all Members of Congress to undergo drug tests? Maybe that might explain why we do some of the things we do here in this Congress.

But, instead, again, they only pick on one sector of the population—poor people. They are the ones who are being blamed for the economy. They are the ones who are being demonized, and they are the ones who are being belittled. It is beneath this Chamber and this House to engage in that kind of discussion.

We need to be making real, meaningful progress to end hunger and poverty in this country. First and foremost, we need to protect and strengthen our important Federal nutrition and antihunger programs. We need bold action that will help people rather than make hunger and poverty worse. That is why I continue to call for a White House conference on food, nutrition, and hunger to develop a holistic plan to end hunger in America, because I think we can do better. I think we need to get all of our Federal agencies and our State agencies to work better together and to connect the dots so that we can deal with this so-called cliff that so many people struggling to get out of poverty hit when they start to make a little bit of money.

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We need to figure out a holistic plan with benchmarks that will actually end hunger. We have a lot of programs, quite frankly, that deal with different aspects of hunger, but I am not sure we have a plan that will actually end it.

Here is the deal. Hunger is a political condition. It is solvable. We have ev-

erything to solve it except the political will. One of the things we should be doing is developing that political will and not going down the road of demonizing some of the most vulnerable people in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts not only for yielding, but also for his years of work fighting hunger. He is one of the strongest advocates we have in Congress in fighting the scourge of hunger. I want to thank him for all of those years of good work.

It is my privilege to be the ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. In that perspective, we played an integral role in the reduction of food insecurity and lowering the prevalence of debilitating health conditions, including obesity, diabetes, and others.

Our committee is tasked with making sure all children have an equal shot at success. One important way is to ensure that by providing healthy, nutritious meals.

There is a Federal role in ensuring that every child has access to a quality education, regardless of where they live or their family's income, and nutrition is a part of making sure they can get that education.

More than 60 years ago, when Congress enacted the first Federal child nutrition program—the National School Lunch Program—Congress acknowledged that feeding hungry children was not only a moral imperative, but also an imperative for the health and security of our Nation.

The National School Lunch Program was actually a response from the military community who were complaining that so many of our young military age youth were unprepared for military service because they were malnourished.

Regrettably today, we are faced with the same crisis that impacts our Nation's national security. Too many of our children are now obese, too obese to enlist in our Nation's military. One-third of the children in this country are overweight, and childhood obesity has tripled in the last 30 years.

While all segments of the population are affected, low-income families are especially vulnerable to obesity and other chronic diseases because they end up eating unhealthy food.

Unfortunately, the poorest among us have the least access to healthy foods, many times without a full-service grocery store or farmer's market in their community.

We still have a long way to go, but there have been positive signs of progress through the implementation of our child nutrition programs.

Thanks to the introduction of stronger standards brought about by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, enacted just a few years ago, students

across the country are experiencing healthy school environments with more nutritious meal options.

One area in dire need of increased access to child nutrition programs and nutritious meals they provide is Flint, Michigan. As everybody knows, the residents of Flint are struggling with the consequences of exposure to high levels of lead as a result of the city's contaminated municipal water supply.

Lead exposure is especially damaging to infants, toddlers, and expectant mothers and can cause behavioral and cognitive problems that last a lifetime.

Although there is no cure for lead poisoning, research shows that a healthy diet, including zinc, vitamin C, iron, and calcium, can mitigate some of the harmful effects.

Federal supplemental funding for nutrition programs, especially the WIC program, would allow access to healthier diets.

Funding for a nutrient-rich third meal, an extension of WIC benefits, to 10 years of age for all eligible children would go a long way to help the residents of Flint, Michigan, deal with lead poisoning.

Mr. Speaker, our committee is now working on a child nutrition reauthorization bill. With this reauthorization, we have a great opportunity to continue to improve the way that children eat, to expand access to nutritious meals, and to end the crisis of childhood hunger in this country.

These efforts do not end with the school year or even the school day. Whether in schools, childcare settings, or summer programs, our goal should be to provide high-quality and nutritious food to all of America's children.

We have a choice to make. We can put money into these important programs now and support healthy eating in our schools and other settings or we can cut corners and spend more money down the road on chronic diseases and other social services, putting the well-being of our children and our Nation's security at risk. Make no mistake. Either way, we will spend the money.

A few years ago medical expenditures to treat obesity in the United States were estimated to be \$147 billion, 16.5 percent of all U.S. medical expenditures.

Investing in the front end, by maintaining strong nutrition standards and increasing access to healthy meals, is obviously a better choice for our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my fellow Members of Congress to continue to invest in our Nation's future by moving forward, not backward, on issues of food insecurity and child nutrition.

I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts again for his longtime advocacy, for his efforts to reduce hunger and to provide better nutrition for our Nation's children.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank the gentleman for his comments and for his leadership, and I thank him for pointing out the links between good nutrition and good health.

We actually will save money in the long run if we provide our people, our young people in particular, nutritious food. We can prevent diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

If people aren't moved by the human aspect of feeding the hungry and all they care about is the bottom line, they ought to join with us to make sure that these nutrition programs are adequately funded.

In addition, you can't learn in school if you are hungry. A breakfast and a lunch to a young child who is hungry is every bit as essential to that child's ability to learn as is a textbook.

We need to understand that. We need to stop nickel-and-diming these nutrition programs and understand that every dollar we invest, every penny we invest, pays us back in ways that can't even be quantified, quite frankly.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), a leader on this issue, a woman who is on the Appropriations Committee, who, again, has been a champion for many, many years on this issue of combating hunger in America.

Ms. DELAURO. I thank the gentleman, and I thank my colleagues. I am so proud to join with you tonight.

And to Congressman MCGOVERN, your unrelenting efforts to address the issue of ending hunger and doing it now, you have been singularly an individual who has never missed a beat in trying to address this issue and bring it to the floor and the public.

And to my colleague from Virginia, who has taken his platform of the Education and the Workforce Committee and have had a focus on how, in fact, we improve the opportunities for our children and whether it is their health or their education, he is at the forefront.

I see we have been joined by Congresswoman GWEN MOORE of Wisconsin, someone who can talk about her own deep personal experiences with hunger and with the food stamp program and what it means to be able to work your way out of these efforts. She has done it to a fare-thee-well.

Mr. Speaker, over 50 million people—nearly one in four—live in hunger in the United States. Don't ever let anybody use the terminology "food security." It is plain and simple hunger.

Kids are hungry in the United States of America. Hunger exists in virtually every community in this country. Social safety net programs are vital tools for reducing the prevalence of poverty and hunger.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP—food stamps, yes—is one of the most powerful programs that we have for ending childhood hunger in the United States. It helps millions of hardworking American families every year.

SNAP works for those who need it most. It has been incredibly successful in alleviating hunger, lifting people out of poverty, and supporting our economy.

SNAP continues to do more than any other government assistance program to lift Americans out of poverty. The numbers speak for themselves.

In 2014 alone, the program lifted 4.7 million people out of poverty, including 2.1 million children. SNAP also lifted more than 1.3 million children out of deep poverty. What is deep poverty? It is 50 percent of what the poverty line is in this Nation.

The program impacts children well beyond their childhood years. Research shows that, among children who grow up in disadvantaged households with access to SNAP, there is an 18 percentage point increase in the likelihood of completing high school.

There has also been evidence of significant improvements in overall health and economic self-sufficiency among women.

SNAP is an extremely efficient program. More than half of all of the benefits go to households in deepest poverty, and over 70 percent of all benefits go to households with children.

Despite what some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would say about fraud, waste, and abuse, the food stamp program has the lowest error rate of any Federal Government program, the lowest error rate.

Based on this anecdote that it is rife with fraud, waste, and abuse, they would deny children food. The data speaks loud and clear about the lowest error rate of any Federal program.

Of course, it is not just children. SNAP helps millions of seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, low-wage workers, and others.

However, Speaker RYAN and other Republican House Members say that we spend trillions of dollars on these programs and, yet, the poverty rate does not change. This is simply not true.

I talked about the statistics earlier on in my comments. Without these critical safety net programs, more Americans would go hungry. As we have said, SNAP kept about 4.8 million people out of poverty, including 2.1 million children.

The data belies what their conversation is and the stories they want to tell and, quite frankly, fabricate around the food stamp program.

The Republican proposals for SNAP include a push to enact block grants, which my colleague, Mr. MCGOVERN, mentioned before, an idea that Jared Bernstein, former chief economist to Vice President BIDEN called "one of the most destructive ideas in poverty policy."

Let me mention some of the statistics that have been compiled by Children's Health Watch in Boston, Massachusetts.

If the SNAP benefits were reduced either through block granting or some other mechanism to reduce food stamp benefits so as to create instability in these households, this is what they say would be likely to occur: 23 percent would be more likely to have households that are food insecure; 70 percent

more likely children would be food insecure; 36 percent more likely to be in poor health if this happens; 70 percent more likely to be at risk for developmental delays—this is about our kids, about our children—12 percent more likely to be hospitalized; children in kindergarten through third grade would be more likely to have measurably lower reading and math test scores; and reduced SNAP benefits would decrease the likelihood of mothers having a baby with a healthy weight and of a low-birth-weight baby surviving.

This is not JIM MCGOVERN or GWEN MOORE or BOBBY SCOTT or ROSA DELAURO making up these statistics. They come from an organization which tracks all of these measures.

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My colleagues, it would include drug testing policies for SNAP recipients and prohibitions for certain food purchases.

What kind of priorities are these?

We can't continue to wage a war against food stamp recipients. Nobody is asking for any other recipients who get Federal subsidies to be drug tested. Let's start with the Crop Insurance people. Let's start with that. Let's take all of the programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture where there is a subsidy and a recipient to that subsidy. Let's get them all drug tested.

We are going to continue to stand up against unconscionable attacks on America's poor working families. I urge my colleagues to stand with us in ensuring that the Federal budget does not harm working families and children by decimating the hunger programs in this Nation.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank the gentleman for her eloquent statement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. I thank the gentleman so much for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in praising Mr. MCGOVERN for his leadership on this issue.

Of the many people who are hungry, none of them have the money to lobby folks—the kids, the disabled people, the seniors, the elderly—but we have a champion in this House, JIM MCGOVERN.

With the few seconds remaining, I want to talk a little bit about our economy. We have a capitalist economy, and it is countercyclical. The SNAP program works to provide a safety net so that when we have a Hurricane Katrina or when we have a Hurricane Sandy, the food stamp rolls go up, and when there are jobs, the food stamp rolls go down. It ain't broke, you all, so let's not try to fix it.

I am very, very disturbed that when the Budget Committee meets next week, it will try to make structural changes to the SNAP program, to throw it into a reconciliation process where only 51 Members of the Senate have to vote for it, out of this body, in

order to change the structure of it so that it is not responsive to people during economic distress.

I am concerned about the numbers of people who are going to ask for a waiver to limit the number of benefits, in a 36-month period, that those who are unemployed can receive. People who are unemployed don't have any control over our economy. When unemployment is up, the SNAP program, as it is currently structured, is responsive to unemployment, and we ought to stick to that.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### END HUNGER NOW

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their eloquent statements here today. I think that they have reinforced the point that these nutrition programs work. SNAP works. It has one of the lowest error rates of any Federal program—less than a 4 percent error rate. That includes underpayments, which means that beneficiaries don't get what they are entitled to. It is a program that allows families to put food on the table.

We need to be supporting these programs. We need to be coming up with a holistic plan to end hunger. We need to raise the minimum wage so that people who work, like the majority of able-bodied people do who are on SNAP, don't have to live in poverty. We can do so much better.

I would just say to my Republican colleagues that, rather than doubling down on the cruelty with some of the proposals that have been brought forth before this House, you ought to work in a bipartisan way to actually lift people out of poverty so as to give people the hope and the ability to lead better lives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to come together and find a way to end hunger now.

#### STOP ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JOLLY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to talk about an issue that I started bringing up about 5 or 6 weeks ago and that I intend to talk about every week until we finally force action in this Chamber.

For over 20 years, I have had the opportunity to study this institution, an institution I believe very deeply in—in its ability to rise to some of our greatest national challenges and to solve some of the greatest problems we face. It was not until as a first-time candidate then elected to office that I had the opportunity to experience a few moments that are very unique to actually being in the Member's chair.

We have had a great debate over the decades about campaign finance reform, about the role of money in politics. It is a legitimate debate. It is a legitimate conversation with strongly felt views on both sides of the aisle, with solutions as diverse as the ideologies of our country—from greater transparency to greater limits, to fewer limits.

Yet, as we have talked about the campaign finance construct in this country and as we have talked about proposed solutions, we have actually ignored one of the greatest blights on this body, itself. It comes not in the form of our campaign finance laws, but it comes in the form of the amount of time that Members of this body are expected or are, in some cases, directed to spend in raising money.

You see, the first way we begin to address campaign finance reform is by addressing a needed congressional reform, a reform that touches not on the current laws of how campaigns are resourced, but on the current rules by which this body governs.

As they were directed a few years back by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—by their leadership—the expectation as a new Member of Congress for a day in D.C. is to spend 4 hours a day on the phone, raising money. The number-one activity, as was suggested to new incoming Members, was to fundraise, not to legislate.

It is a very uncomfortable truth. As I said last week, it is very uncomfortable for me to talk about this amongst my colleagues, but we represent, each of us, 700,000 people back home who trust us. They trust us to serve, and in serving, we are to give voice to their priorities.

Dear folks, the priorities of our constituents is not fundraising. You see, there is a broad diversity of priorities—from border security, to immigration reform, to transportation, to tax reform. I listened to colleagues in the last hour talk about balancing the budget. Others talked about programs that are critical to ending hunger here in the United States, but we will never solve these problems on behalf of the people who sent us here if we spend more time on the phone, raising money, than we do in legislating, in tackling these very problems that we have tried to give voice to.

Last week I did share with this body the orientation card that was provided to some incoming Members a few years back. Today I have with me some quotes from retiring Members of Congress, from those on the way out the door or who have already left.

The first one, you will notice, is a confession from a colleague on my side of the aisle, upon his retirement, who said that fundraising is the main business of Congress.

The other one is from the retired Senate majority leader who said that a Senator has to raise \$10,000 a day every day he is in office, every day for 6 years, simply to finance his reelection.